

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
Bureau of Customs and Border Protection

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Alamagordo Agents Locate \$1 Million in Marijuana Over Weekend

Drug Smuggling Accelerating at New Mexico Traffic Checkpoints

EL PASO, Texas – Border Patrol agents at traffic checkpoints outside of Alamogordo, N. M. made five separate marijuana seizures totaling 1,271 pounds in weekend activity on New Mexico Highways 54 and 70.

The surge of drug smuggling traffic began Saturday when agents assigned to the Highway Traffic Checkpoint on Highway 70 located 703 pounds of marijuana hidden in the back of a tractor-trailer in a load of frozen Mexican food. The contraband was found in eight large boxes in the trailer area that contained a total of 373 separate bundles in cardboard boxes. A 29-year old from Guatemala, who was driving the truck, was arrested at the scene and turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Las Cruces. He remains in custody pending formal charges of possession with intent to distribute.

Agents at the Traffic Checkpoint on Highway 54 south of Alamogordo were busy making two other seizures Saturday in the amounts of 193 pounds and 149 pounds of marijuana. The 193-pound seizure was made in a late model 18-wheel cattle truck with the help of a Border Patrol canine. Agents removed 33 bundles from five duffel bags in the feed compartment of the trailer. A 52-year old resident from Omaha, Neb., and a 43-year old Florida resident were taken into custody and turned over to the custody of DEA with the marijuana and truck.

Also Saturday, agents at the Highway 54 Checkpoint used a fiber-optic scope to lead them to 149 pounds of marijuana hidden in the gas tank of a 1990 GMC truck. Agents say unusually impatient mannerism by the driver, a 20-year old male from Chihuahua, prompted them to call on the assistance of a canine. The canine alerted to the truck undercarriage where the green leafy substance was located. The driver was also turned over to DEA for disposition.

Sunday, agents on Highway 54 seized 21 bundles of marijuana that totaled 71 pounds in a 1987 Acura sedan. The stash was found in 21 bundles underneath the console of the car, which was detected by a canine. One 22-year old El Paso resident was arrested and turned over to DEA with the contraband and vehicle.

To date, agents in Alamogordo have made 156 seizures, valued at approximately \$17 million since October 1, the start of the 2003 Fiscal Year.

On March 1, 2003, the United States Border Patrol became part of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, under the Department of Homeland Security.

*****VHS and digital photos video available to interested members of the media.***